

## RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, with the holiday season in full swing, many American families are feeling the strain on their family finances. This is especially true for the millions of Americans who work full time for minimum wage and only earn about \$10,700 a year. The minimum wage in this Nation is currently at its lowest level in 50 years when adjusted for inflation.

Yet Republicans have continually refused to raise the pay of these full-time workers who struggle to make ends meet while facing a rapidly rising cost of living. An hourly wage of \$5.15 an hour is simply not a fair living wage for anyone. Democrats have fought for years to raise the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour, a move that would positively benefit 7.3 million Americans. Madam Speaker, last month the American people showed their overwhelming support for this much-needed increase by voting for a Democratic majority in Congress and passing the minimum wage increase ballot initiatives in several States. Within the first 100 hours of the next Congress, Democrats will pass this important and long overdue legislation. Let's raise the minimum wage now.

WELCOME CHANGE AT THE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, as a strong opponent of the war in Iraq from the very beginning, I welcome the change in leadership at the Department of Defense. After years of hearing shifting rationales for the preemptive military strike launched by the Bush administration, the American public deserves a realistic evaluation of the conflict which has cost thousands of American and Iraqi lives.

It was sobering to hear Robert Gates, the nominee for Secretary of Defense, acknowledge yesterday that we are not winning the war in Iraq despite repeated reassurances to the contrary by the former Defense Secretary. Those of us who made the case in October of 2002 that we should not rush to war until the weapons inspectors had completed their work are deeply saddened that this unnecessary war has taken such a heavy toll and diminished the standing of the United States around the world.

I look forward to examining the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group so that we can try to find our way out of this quagmire that was created by the rush to war based on faulty or, even worse, deliberately distorted intelligence.

## DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, this year's Republican Congress was dubbed the most do-nothing Congress of all time, because it refused to do its job. Every year, at the very least, Congress is supposed to pass a budget and the 10 appropriation bills that fund the Federal Government. The Republicans never agreed on a budget resolution, and to date only two of the 10 appropriations bills have been signed into law.

Congressional Republicans plan to adjourn this week without passing the eight other bills. It doesn't matter that we are already 2 months into the 2007 fiscal year. It doesn't matter to them apparently that important spending decisions need to be made for crucial health care, education, transportation and environmental programs. Congressional Republicans simply refuse to do the job they were sent here to do.

Instead, they want to punt all of these funding decisions to the next Democratic Congress, giving us only a month to address the 2007 budget before the President sends us his 2008 budget recommendations. This is not the way Congress is supposed to work. The American people rightfully rejected a do-nothing Congress that continues to live up to its name.

LAME DUCK CONGRESS WADDLES  
TO AN IRRESPONSIBLE CLOSE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, last month Americans went to the voting booth to voice their displeasure with the most do-nothing Congress in our Nation's history. It was bad enough the Republican Congress rejected our efforts to increase the minimum wage, to prevent Big Oil from price-gouging the American consumer, and to prevent seniors from falling into the prescription drug doughnut hole.

But now the most do-nothing Congress of all time prepares to leave Washington without passing a budget for the current fiscal year. Under the headline, "The lame duck Congress waddles to an irresponsible close," the Washington Post yesterday wrote, and I quote, "We understand the political temptation to do mischief by doing nothing, but this is a gross abdication of lawmakers' fundamental responsibilities. It creates enormous problems across the broad spectrum of Federal agencies which have no assurance about what their final spending allowances will be."

House Republicans refuse to do their job and have decided to throw their budget mess to the new Democratic Congress. Talk about being irresponsible.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

RECORD votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK  
REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2006

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 3938) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 3938

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Export-Import Bank Reauthorization Act of 2006".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Extension of authority.
- Sec. 3. Sub-Saharan Africa Advisory Committee.
- Sec. 4. Extension of authority to provide financing for the export of non-lethal defense articles or services the primary end use of which will be for civilian purposes.
- Sec. 5. Designation of sensitive commercial sectors and products.
- Sec. 6. Increasing exports by small business.
- Sec. 7. Anti-circumvention.
- Sec. 8. Transparency.
- Sec. 9. Aggregate loan, guarantee, and insurance authority.
- Sec. 10. Tied aid credit program.
- Sec. 11. Prohibition on assistance to develop or promote certain railway connections and railway-related connections.
- Sec. 12. Process for notifying applicants of application status; implementation of Ex-Im Online.
- Sec. 13. Competitiveness initiatives.
- Sec. 14. Office of financing for socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns and small business concerns owned by women.
- Sec. 15. Governance.
- Sec. 16. Sense of Congress regarding multi-buyer insurance and capital guarantee programs.
- Sec. 17. Sense of Congress regarding office of renewable energy promotion.
- Sec. 18. Environmental matters.
- Sec. 19. Government Accountability Office study of bank performance standards for assistance to small businesses, especially those owned by social and economically disadvantaged individuals and those owned by women.
- Sec. 20. Reports.
- Sec. 21. Study of how Export-Import Bank could assist United States exporters to meet import needs of new or impoverished democracies; report.